



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

II.—A PLEA FOR THE STUDY OF LITERATURE FROM THE ÆSTHETIC STANDPOINT.

That teacher of literature who has not comprehended the significance of a work of Art, has never been endued with the spirit and power of his high calling. He stands unwittingly in the place of an apostle of "that external quality of bodies which may be shown to be in some sort typical of the Divine attributes."

"Those qualities, or types," according to RUSKIN, "on whose combination is dependent the power of mere *material loveliness*" are :

"Infinity, or the type of Divine Incomprehensibility ; Unity, or the type of the Divine Comprehensibility ; Repose, or the type of the Divine Permanence ; Symmetry, or the type of the Divine Justice ; Purity, or the type of the Divine Energy ; Moderation, or the type of Government by Law."

Does a work of Art in its length, and breadth, and height, and depth mean so much? Does one of SHAKESPEARE'S dramas stand for that much? Let the teacher of literature realize this and he will be clothed with a newer and finer dignity.

He ought to stand forth as the expounder of that "Beauty" which "is its own excuse for being," against utilitarian beauty. We are in the thrall of utilitarian ideas and are being dwarfed into low and mean statures. We need to appropriate much of that which will enlarge us and lift us up towards Deity. It is a lamentable fact that "we only believe as deep as we live." The Master found this low kind of faith on the earth, and in that memorable sermon not only reprehended engrossing anxiety for something to eat and something to drink and something to wear, but exhorted men to "consider the lilies of the field."

Things have an æsthetic value as well as a utility value. Utilitarian worth is intrinsic, æsthetic worth is extrinsic. The intrinsic administers to the necessities, comforts and conveniences of the body, the outer man ; the extrinsic, because it is a symbolic worth, ministers to the soul, the inner man. That which grati-

fies the senses is utilitarian ; that which gratifies the imagination is æsthetic. The one has in it the greed and selfishness of the Pit, the other has the charity and unselfishness of the God who inhabits eternity. Are not men rampant to monopolize the goods of this world? Do they not quarrel and often cut one another's throats for paltry considerations? But in the presence of that which no man can put into his pocket, but which, if he take, must receive into the soul, how would we have all men share it? We are perfectly unselfish in wishing every one to enjoy the master-pieces of Art. We would call every one to see the rainbow, pillared on earth, arching the heavens. How often do we exult with one another in the rapturous beauty of a sunset? Over our bread and meat we may spit and snarl, but at the feast of beauty there is the concord of the bright inhabitants of the celestial home.

We need to learn more frequently and fully the soul-value of things in order to bring the spirit that thinks no evil into our wretched utilitarian life.

"The new virtue which constitutes a thing beautiful is a certain cosmical quality, or a power to suggest relation to the whole world, and so lift the object out of a pitiful individuality. . . . The feat of the imagination is in showing the convertibility of everything into every other thing. Facts which had never before left their stark common sense, suddenly figure as Eleusinian mysteries. My boots and chair and candlestick are fairies in disguise, meteors and constellations. All the facts in nature are nouns of the intellect, and make the grammar of the eternal language. . . . And there is a joy in perceiving the representative or symbolic character of a fact, which no bare fact or event can ever give,"

so writes EMERSON. Again in verse, he says :

"Give to barrows trays and pans
Grace and glimmer of romance,
.
.
.
Let statue, picture park and hall,
Ballad, flag and festival,
The past restore, the day adorn
And make each morrow a new morn
So shall the drudge in dusty frock
Spy behind the city clock
Retinues of airy kings,
Skirts of angels, starry wings,
His fathers shining in bright fables,

His children fed at heavenly tables.
 'Tis the privilege of Art
 Thus to play its cheerful part,
 Man in Earth to acclimate
 And bend the exile to his fate,
 And moulded of one element
 With the days and firmament,
 Teach him on these as stairs to climb
 And live on even terms with Time."

As illustrative of how mean the utilitarian estimate of a thing is, consider how the people in general regard the sky. There is no portion of God's creation that speaks more to the soul and less to the meaner man, and yet, men generally think of the sky as a something under which sunshine and rain succeed each other to the intent that grass may grow and their barns be filled. This from RUSKIN is apropos :

"Every essential purpose of the sky might, so far as we know, be answered, if once in three days, or thereabouts, a great ugly black rain cloud were brought up over the blue, and everything well watered, and so all left blue again until next time, with perhaps a film of morning and evening mist for dew. And instead of this, there is not a moment of any day of our lives, when nature is not producing scene after scene, picture after picture, glory after glory, and working still upon such exquisite and constant principles of the most perfect beauty, that it is quite certain it is all done for us and intended for our perpetual pleasure. . . . And yet we never attend to it, we never make it a subject of thought, but as it has to do with our animal sensations, we look upon all by which it speaks to us more clearly than the brutes, upon all which bears witness to the intention of the Supreme, that we are to receive more from the covering vault than light and dew which we share with the weed and the worm, only as a succession of meaningless and monotonous accident, too common and too vain to be worthy of a moment of watchfulness, or a glance of admiration. . . . They are but the blunt and low faculties of our nature, which can only be addressed through lampblack and lightning. It is in quiet and subdued passages of unobtrusive majesty, the deep, and the calm, and the perpetual,—that which must be sought ere it is seen, and loved ere it is understood,—things which the angels work out for us daily, and yet vary eternally, which are never wanting, and never repeated, which are to be found always, yet each found but once ; it is through these that the lesson of devotion is chiefly taught, and the blessing of beauty given."

Now note how this artist sees the material nearness of God in the heavens.

"In them hath he set a *tabernacle* for the sun ; whose burning ball, which without the firmament would be seen as an intolerable and scorching circle in the blackness of vacuity, is by that firmament surrounded with gorgeous service, and tempered with mediatorial ministries, by the firmament of clouds the golden pavement is spread for his chariot wheels at morning, by the firmament of clouds the temple is built for his presence to fill with light at noon : by the firmament of clouds the purple veil is closed at evening round the sanctuary of his rest ; by the mists of the firmament his implacable light is divided, and its separated fierceness appeased into the soft blue that fills the depth of the distance with its bloom, and the flush with which the mountains burn as they drink the overflowing of the day-spring. And in this tabernacling of unendurable sun with men, through the shadows of the firmament, God would seem to set forth the stooping of His own majesty to men, upon the *throne* of the firmament. . . . And all those passings to and fro of fruitful shower and grateful shade, and all those visions of silver palaces built about the horizon, and voices of moaning winds and threatening thunders, and glories of colored robe and cloven ray, are but to deepen in our hearts the acceptance, and distinctness, and dearness of the simple words, 'Our Father which art in Heaven.'"

It is the utilitarian value of things that can be reckoned in dollars and cents ; the æsthetic value is enduring and can be told only in terms of the soul's infinite and eternal attributes.

Is it not clear that the quality which constitutes a thing beautiful is external ? that it is something extrinsic ? that it does not inhere in the thing by nature, but is *supernatural* ?

This external quality must, then, come from without. Whence does it come ? From workmanship. It is workmanship that gives worth to material even from the utility standpoint, but the workmanship that lifts material into soul service is fine art. The workmanship that surpasses the material constitutes Art.

OID in describing the Sun-God's palace, after speaking of the lofty columns and the splendid and priceless material adds, "*Materiam opus Superabat.*"

"Sublime on lofty columns, bright with gold
And fiery carbuncle, its roof inlaid
With ivory, rose the Palace of the Sun,
Approached by folding gates with silver sheen
Radiant ; Material priceless,—yet less prized
For its worth than what the cunning head
Of Mulciber thereon had wrought."

The workmanship of the artisan is mechanical, but that of the artist is creative. The artist is a creator. "The delight which a work of art affords, seems to arise from our recognizing in it the mind that formed Nature, again in active operation." The artist unlike the artisan, "disindividualizes" himself, and becomes for the moment the vent of the absolute mind which in every such instance creates. Wherefore, "the artist does not feel himself to be the parent of his work." Does not this indicate the divine significance of a work of art?

But if the artist is a creator, his works are creations, and therefore organic. EMERSON writes:

"We feel, in seeing a noble building, which rhymes well, as we do in hearing a perfect song, that it is spiritually organic; that is, had a necessity, in nature, for being; was one of the possible forms in the Divine mind, and is now only discovered and executed by the artist not arbitrarily composed by him."

He further says:

"Arising out of eternal Reason, one and perfect, whatever is beautiful rests on the foundation of the necessary. Nothing is arbitrary, nothing is insulated in beauty. It depends forever on the necessary and useful. The plumage of the bird, the mimic plumage of the insect, has a reason for its rich colors in the constitution of the animal."

Do you remember that CUVIER could from single bones reconstruct the bony fabrics to which they belonged, and that AGASSIZ from isolated scales restored the whole fish? Why? Because in the constitution of an organic whole there are no unnecessary and insignificant parts. So art has been rightly termed "the purgation of superfluities." No integral part of a work of art is less necessary and less significant than such a part of a sentient creature. This further emphasizes the excellency of workmanship found in the highest art. But highest art demands workmanship that produces the ideal of a species. It is evident there are few, if any, perfect individuals of any species in Nature. Nature is always striving to make the perfect flower, or the perfect man. Does any one ask if man can see the ideals towards which nature is straining and has not yet attained? The answer is,

"His soul sees the perfect,
Which his eyes seek in vain."

In accomplishing this end in art, it is true that "the soul doth the body make," but it makes it through the man, the artist. hence *workmanship*. BROWNING says :

"Paint the soul, never mind legs and arms!"

He said, however, a little before, of the soul,

. . . "it's a fire, smoke . . . no it's not . . .
It's vapor done up like a new-born babe." . . .

Who the most ardent admirer of BROWNING can say that we have not here his rule of faith and practice? Can you paint the soul and not mind legs and arms?

TENNYSON, that artist next to SHAKESPEARE, knows there is a human side to art, represented in *workmanship*, and that *for man* it is all-important, because through it only is the divine significance of a thing made manifest. He knows too that the soul of things makes the body, and knows the body is made through a conscious agent, through a self-conscious agent, wherefore the body may be marred in the making. How diligently and unerringly did he make his faith in this direction tell with effect?

Let us examine his *workmanship* to find if he makes every part—any part—vital and necessary to the whole of which it is a part. Any part ought to be suggestive and significant of the whole, just as a single bone was to CUVIER. If it is not, the work is not organic, not art.

Suppose we take the picture of the Miller in the first stanza of "The Miller's Daughter."

"I see the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead dryly curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half without,
And full of dealings with the world."

Who can add to that or take from it and not spoil it? Do you know why he called him "wealthy"? Because he had "busy wrinkles round his eyes," because he had a "smile that was full of dealings with the world." This smile was not only "wise," but a "slow wise smile," "seem'd half-within and half-without"—that means equanimity, and it *curl'd* around his dusty forehead *dryly*. Could you expect "a slow wise smile" to do oth-

erwise than *curl*,—a quick smile would flash—and curl *dryly*, round a *dusty* forehead, beneath which is the double chin, and all belonging to a portly size? How strong is the unity? It lacks nothing, nor has it a jot too much! It is complete within itself, yet the part of a larger whole. It is like the perfect arm of a body, not too long nor too short, not too large nor too small.

By the way, does not the part, or the whole, which has neither more nor less than of right belongs to it, represent justice? And in the realm of art where no utilitarian interest of any party is subserved, but the free unselfish pleasure of all, completeness represents divine justice.

With all the unity and completeness of this first stanza note how vitally it is joined to the second, also complete in itself. It is another part of the Miller's picture.

“In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver cup,
I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest—gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me sad.”

Is not that the kind of soul fit for the wealthy Miller of double chin and portly size? Such a soul in such a body, with its summer lightnings, would shine through gray eyes, too!

These two stanzas show TENNYSON'S workmanship not only in the parts themselves, but his skill in joining the parts: they are complete and vitally joined. These stanzas taken together make a larger, necessary, part of the whole poem. The poem is about “The Miller's Daughter,” but what Miller's daughter? Why, the wealthy Miller's daughter. The whole poem is made of living parts fitly joined together. This is the character of TENNYSON'S workmanship everywhere.. It is creative workmanship that can make a complete whole of perfect parts.

All this shows the excellency of TENNYSON'S workmanship with reference to the organic elements of unity and completeness. Let us look at the material on which he displayed his skill. He had such common stuff as, “miller,” “wrinkles,” “eyes,” “smile,” “forehead,” “dusty,” “world,” “chair,” “three fingers,” “silver cup,” “jest,” “summer lightnings.” He didn't

have these actual things, but the ideas of them. Does not his workmanship make much out of little? Does not his workmanship surpass his material?

Suppose we take that wayside flower, the dandelion, to find how much the artist can make out of so common a thing?

He speaks of it as

“Fringing the dusty road with harmless gold,
First pledge of blithesome May,
Which children pluck, and, full of pride, uphold,
High-hearted buccaneers, o’erjoyed that they
An Eldorado in the grass have found,
Which not the rich earth’s ample round
May match in wealth ”——

Can you fathom the depth of that expression, “harmless gold”? How abundant is this “harmless gold”! It *fringes*, not the unfrequented pathway, but the *dusty* road. Can you tell how much is meant in saying that *children*—not men—pluck it? and pluck it as “high-hearted buccaneers”? There is gold for you that has been coined not in a government mint, but in the soul of the poet. It has been coined, not into hard yellow dollars, but into the currency of Heaven. It has the stamp of the divine upon it; that is why it is incomprehensible. That is what the poet means a little further on, in saying that

“Most hearts never understand
To take it at God’s value.”

Listen to another stanza about this matchless wealth:

“Gold such as thine ne’er drew the Spanish prow
Through the primeval hush of Indian seas,
Nor wrinkled the lean brow
Of age to rob the lover’s heart of ease;
’Tis the spring’s largess, which she scatters now
To rich and poor alike, with lavish hand,
Though most hearts never understand
To take it at God’s value, but pass by
The offered wealth with unrewarded eye.”

Everything made, has a significance commensurate with the diameter of the being that made it. All creation is full of the significance of God. It is the peculiar prerogative of the artist to stamp God’s enduring values upon things. Does not that require creative workmanship? Has not the common dandelion been recreated for us?

But when we say the flower has been recreated, it is not meant actually, only that the idea of the flower, that is, the pictured product of mental processes, has been recreated with cosmical relations. Only in this way can the flower be taken out of the entanglement of a confusing variety and made to stand out in its individuality as a part of the universal whole. Everything in nature in its individual significance points, in one direction, to God as its maker, and, in the other, to man for the purpose of its creation. Individuality is the main thing. It is that which art aims at, because it is that which pleases.

Since it is the pictured product of the dandelion that can be recreated and not the actual flower, we can infer the essential nature of creation as a process: it is spiritual. The flower was a pictured product in the mind of God before it became a material product. The physical product is not a creation but expressive of a creation. Then a creation is essentially spiritual, and so has the infinities for its elements. God comes down to man in representative physical facts; man ascends to God through the interpretation of these facts. Remember that the physical product is only a representation of a creation, therefore if one comprehend fully what is represented he recreates and in recreating he puts God's meaning on the thing. This is called "thinking God's thoughts after him." That the artist does.

Note that God goes from the spiritual product to the physical, but the artist goes from the physical product to the spiritual. Unless the man express the result of such a process in a physical form he is not known as an artist. The artist's material, then, is spiritual, which fact prevents his work ever falling into the sphere of the utilitarian.

But in order to express a spiritual process and product a physical basis is needed. In this basis workmanship is displayed. The physical basis of art in literature is language.

The creative genius of the artist is hindered in its free play of expression by the physical basis in which he works. For instance, in sculpture only formal beauty can be represented; in painting the necessity of simultaneousness cripples; in music we have quantity and quality but not distinctness. In literature, however, language obstructs least the efforts of the unseen, but real, things of the soul to publish themselves. "Material only on one side," EMERSON calls language "a demigod." It is the

universal medium for the communication of thought. For that reason we ought to expect to find the highest art in literature. There it is we do find it as TENNYSON and SHAKESPEARE bear witness.

The significance of a work of art is a fact potent enough to urge us to study it, but when the physical side of art is language the reason is more potent, in that it is more accessible to our intelligence. We are all practiced in the use of language, but not all in the use of the chisel and the brush. The richest art is thus accessible to all.

More than that, we do not need to make an ocean voyage to find this best art! Why have we not realized that? For a few dollars we can have all the master-pieces of all literatures.

Almost every home in this land has some of the masters, and oftenest the two or three greatest. Whose is the fault that they do not appreciate them as masters, but are settled in the conclusion that there is no art worth speaking of this side of the Galleries of Europe? Let the teachers of literature answer that question.

Think of it! For two dimes one can have 'The Pilgrim's Progress' and 'Paradise Lost'! For less than one dollar one can own the countless wealth of the SHAKESPEARIAN gallery! With a bit of economy any day-laborer can have the best of SPENSER, WORDSWORTH, BROWNING, TENNYSON, LONGFELLOW, LOWELL, WHITTIER, HOLMES, THACKERAY, SCOTT, HAWTHORNE, RUSKIN, EMERSON and others—a glorious company! Under one's own humble roof too! The best of art within the reach of the lowliest.

What more is needed to show how invaluable is the study of literature from the æsthetic standpoint? What is wanting to make plain that it is the teacher's bounden duty to present it from that side? Do you know why we have just now such a dearth of literary artists? It is not because this age is not as great as any past. It is because the masters in literature are not studied. What eminent artist has there been who did not study diligently the masters before him? Through the persistent study of creative workmanship the inborn creative aptitudes are developed, and the student becomes an artist.

The popular literature of the day in the form of novels is journeyman literature, it is made, not created;—made to sell.

This deluge of so-called literature means for the writers of it, that they have not only not studied the masters, but that their apprenticeship has been to journeyman workmanship. They produce nothing better than journeyman because they know nothing better. The study of journeyman workmanship develops simply the journeyman aptitudes. No wonder we hear of the decadence of genuine literature. For the readers of this popular literature it means that they have read nothing better. If they had read the masters, and read them creatively, they could never be satisfied with manufactured literature.

It is a lack of teaching in our schools that we have so few writers of more than moderate inventive ability. To this lack must be likewise attributed the scarcity of interpretive readers. If students are had to study creative workmanship, those who have some ambition to become writers will not forget the lessons and the sources of inspiration, and those who have no such ambition, but crave something good to read as they do something good to eat, will not be satisfied with "Detective Stories."

The newspapers, if they be not the "head and front of the offending," are even now industriously helping on this decadence. The "trashy" novels, for instance, that are published within a half year are for number

"thick as leaves that strow the brooks
In Valambrosa."

Because we are all newspaper readers, the publishers enterprisingly "boom" such literature through the papers. According to the papers this or that book is the sensation of the hour. Everybody is reading it. You are made to feel that you are behind the times unless you read it. One such sensation is not off before another is on, and so goes the world. Thus do the newspapers, our most frequent and most welcome visitors, lend themselves to prostitute the inventive aptitudes of our young men and women.

The secular press becomes in this way the paid champion of this literature. That is a prodigious power for the teachers of this country to stand against, yet it must be done, or we shall become mere drivellers in literature.

If we teachers can exact, and have kept, on the part of our students, the promise to observe EMERSON'S first rule regarding books, namely, "Never read any book that is not a year old,"

what would be the result in a few years? If they would keep the first rule, we can in our teaching have them observe the second, "Never read any but famed books." Young men and women thus taught will go forth to teach others until we shall cease waning and begin waxing.

Is it not the duty of every teacher to study to teach literature from this standpoint, and is not this duty made imperative, as well by what our present declension portends as by what we as a people ought and can become in literature?

Is not our horizon broad enough and our heaven high enough for a MILTON with his sublime head? Is not the world within our borders? and at every man's door? In the distance is making towards us the "poet-priest, a reconciler, who shall not trifle, with SHAKESPEARE, the player, nor grope in graves, with SWEDENBORG the mourner but who shall see, speak and act, with equal inspiration."

JOHN P. FRUIT.

BETHEL COLLEGE.